NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

Capertee National Park

Planning considerations

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Cover photo: Regent honeyeater. Bruce Thompson/DPE

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Environment and Heritage Group
Department of Planning and Environment
Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta NSW 2124
Phone: +61 2 9995 5000 (switchboard)
Phone: 1300 361 967 (Environment and heritage enquiries)
TTY users: phone 133 677, then ask for 1300 361 967
Speak and listen users: phone 1300 555 727, then ask for 1300 361 967
Email: info@environment.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.environment.nsw.gov.au

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This planning considerations report outlines the matters considered in preparing the *Capertee National Park plan of management*, including the park's key values, management principles and management considerations. Further information is provided in the appendices, including relevant legislation (Appendix A), scientific names for common names of species (Appendix B). The 'More information' section provides links to relevant websites.

It is recommended that readers of this report also read the plan of management.

The plan of management describes the desired outcomes for the park's values and actions that National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) proposes to undertake to achieve these outcomes. It also sets out the recreational and commercial activities that are permitted in the park and any requirements to undertake these activities, including whether consent must be sought from the NPWS to undertake them.

Acknowledgements

Capertee National Park is in the traditional Country of the Wiradjuri People.

This document was prepared by the staff of NPWS.

Contact us

For more information about this report or Capertee National Park, contact the NPWS Mudgee Area at npws.mudgee@environment.nsw.gov.au, 27 Inglis Street, Mudgee, or by telephone on 02 6370 9000.

Connection to Country

The park covered in this plan is part of an ancient landscape that includes the Aboriginal people. The area now known as Capertee National Park has traditionally been under the care of the Wiradjuri People, and other families, groups and people. Aboriginal people have a deep spiritual and cultural connection to this Country. Their ancestors have lived here for thousands of years and, in doing so, form part of this living landscape.

Connections to Country and the significance of these parks to Aboriginal peoples — past, present and future — are respected by NPWS and acknowledged. NPWS supports and acknowledges the role of Aboriginal people in identifying traditional connections and custodians for this place.

Photo 1 Capertee River, Capertee National Park. Michelle Barton/DPE

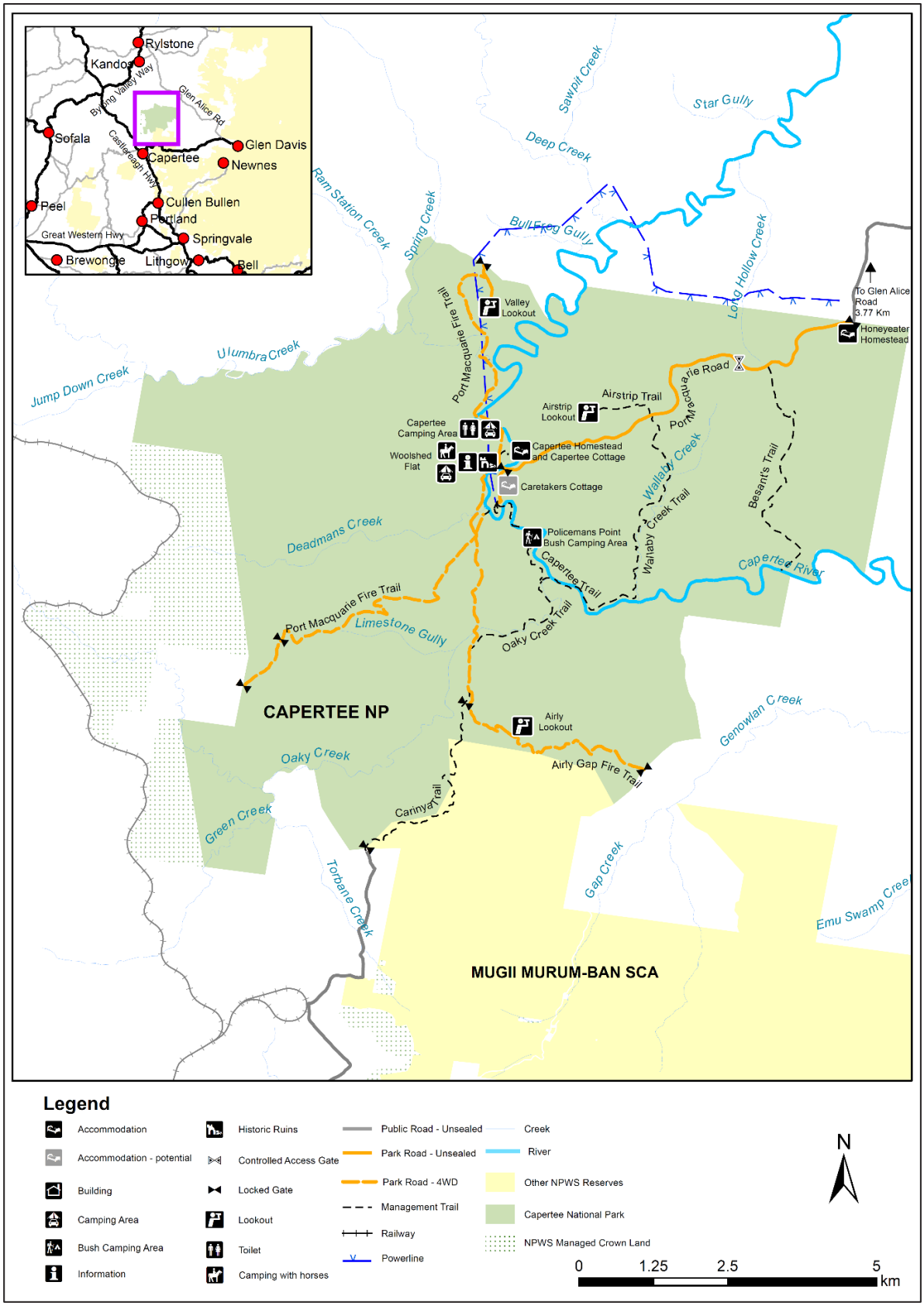

Figure 1 Capertee National Park

1. Capertee National Park

Capertee National Park (Wiradjuri Country) is 6,796 ha and is located in the NSW South Western Slopes Bioregion in central-west New South Wales, approximately 115 km north of Lithgow in the Capertee Valley. The park shares its name with surrounding geographical features, including the Capertee River. See Figure 1.

The park is adjacent to private property and other areas of Crown land managed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) for the purpose of conservation under a licence issued under section 34A of the *Crown Lands Act 1989*. The beds and banks of the Capertee River and Ulumbra Creek, which flow through the park, do not form part of the park and remain as Crown waterway reserves.

The southern boundary of the park adjoins Mugii Murum-ban State Conservation Area. Together, these parks are contiguous with Gardens of Stone and Wollemi national parks, which are part of the Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage property. Turon National Park is also located near the south-west boundary of the park.

The park initially comprised 2,839 ha when it was reserved on 25 June 2010, becoming the 800th national park reserved in New South Wales. A number of additions have been made to Capertee National Park since gazettal. These additions increase the protection of habitat for woodland birds, including the critically endangered regent honeyeater.

The land within the park was previously a mix of freehold and leasehold land associated with the property known as Port Macquarie. Additions to the park were made in 2016 from previously licensed Crown land, followed by the purchase of the neighbouring property, Glenolan, in 2019 and its reservation in 2020. Land use surrounding the park includes cleared agricultural land used for grazing, coalmining, a rail corridor and state forest. The park is located within the areas of the Bathurst Local Aboriginal Land Council, Central Tablelands Local Land Services and Lithgow City Council.

Photo 2 Capertee National Park. Tim Johnson/DPE

2. Protecting the natural environment

2.1 Native plants and animals

Capertee National Park is significant for its variety of ecosystems and habitats, which is reflected in the diversity of native plants and animals recorded in the park. The park continues the natural corridor of reserved land linking to the Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage property and other nearby natural areas, contributing to the movement of native animals and connectivity of native vegetation throughout the region.

The open woodland vegetation communities provide essential habitat for many threatened bird species, in particular the regent honeyeater, which is listed as critically endangered under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) and Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The Capertee Valley was listed in 2009 as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area by Bird Life International due to its significance for bird conservation.

As an outcome of the area's complex geology, the park contains 11 vegetation communities (Appendix C), including White Box – Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland critically endangered ecological community. The woodland and grassland communities protected within the park are particularly important because these communities have been cleared extensively throughout Australia.

The park also contains 3 threatened plant species, including *Phebalium bifidum,* which is known to occur on the Glenolan property, which was recently added to the park. This is the first record of this endangered plant on national park estate (A Bryce, [NPWS] 2021, pers. comms.). The grey grevillea is another important threatened plant in the park, with most of the population growing on the verge of roads and management trails (see Appendix D).

Fauna surveys and opportunistic sightings in the park have identified 204 native animal species, including 151 birds, 25 mammals, 11 reptiles and 9 frogs, of which 26 are listed as threatened (see Appendix E).

Additional threatened plant and animal species have been recorded within 5 km of the park and could potentially exist in the park. Further survey efforts are likely to identify additional species because the park has not yet been systematically surveyed.

Strategies for the conservation of threatened species, populations and ecological communities have been set out in a statewide Biodiversity Conservation Program. Actions listed in each of these strategies are prioritised and implemented through the Saving our Species program, which aims to maximise the number of threatened species secured in the wild in New South Wales for 100 years.

The NPWS threatened species (zero extinctions) framework (DPIE 2021) includes a series of actions designed to secure and restore threatened species populations, specifically to prevent extinctions on the national park estate and to stabilise or improve the on-park trajectory of all threatened species. These actions include declaring assets of intergenerational significance under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

Areas within Capertee National Park have been declared an asset of intergenerational significance for the conservation of regent honeyeater habitat. Consistent with the NPW Regulation, management of these areas is guided by a conservation action plan. In future, other areas in the park may be declared assets of intergenerational significance.

Many recovery plans for NSW threatened species have previously been prepared and may still provide useful information, but they no longer determine the actions required to conserve threatened species in New South Wales.

The Australian Government prepares recovery plans for nationally listed threatened species under the EPBC Act. These plans also apply to nationally listed threatened species occurring in the park (see DEC 2006a; DECCW 2009; DNRE 1999; NPWS 2003).

Box 1: The regent honeyeater

The regent honeyeater is an iconic and critically endangered woodland bird species. The park affords significant protection for this cryptic bird during the breeding part of its life cycle. There are estimated to be between 350 and 400 breeding pairs of the species left in the wild, with that number decreasing (IUCN Red List). There are now only 4 known breeding sites for this species in Australia:

- Capertee Valley
- NSW Hunter Valley district
- Bundarra-Barraba Important Bird Area in NSW Northern Tablelands
- the Chiltern area in north-east Victoria (DoE 2016).

Enhancement and maintenance of regent honeyeater habitat is essential to support the existing breeding pairs that frequent the park and to provide a suitable release site for captive breeding programs. The regent honeyeater is a forager known to feed on the nectar of the flowers of a small number of eucalypt species, the fruits of certain mistletoes, as well as insects and honeydew. The critically endangered ecological community White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Woodland is particularly important. The regent honeyeater generally nests in the river she-oaks in the riparian zone of the Capertee River and forages in the adjacent grassy woodlands.

The main threats to the regent honeyeater and its habitat in the park are:

- modification of habitat through the cumulative impact of grazing by grey kangaroos and feral animals, including goats, pigs and rabbits
- overabundant native species such as noisy miners, pied currawongs and Australian ravens which compete with the regent honeyeater for food and habitat (L Menke [NPWS] 2021, pers. comm.)
- inappropriate behaviour of birdwatchers – minimising disturbance requires birdwatchers to stay on designated roads and avoid getting too close to foraging birds and their nests.

The park encompasses land that operated as a working grazing and cropping property for more than 150 years. As a result, many agricultural weeds are present on and adjacent to the park (see Appendix F). The *Biosecurity Act 2015* and its regulations provide specific legal requirements for the response, management and control of biosecurity risks, including weeds and feral animals. These requirements apply equally to public land and private land. Under this legislative framework, the *Central Tablelands regional strategic weed management plan* (CTLLS 2017) and the *Central Tablelands regional strategic pest animal management plan* (CTLLS 2018) provide strategic direction for the management of weeds and feral animals across the Local Land Services (LLS) Central Tablelands Region, which encompasses the park.

Climate change has also been identified as a threat to biodiversity values as it intensifies the effects of other threats, such as feral animals and weeds, by creating more-intense weather variables such as hotter, drier days and increased intensity of flooding.

The predicted increases in temperature, number of hot days and severe fire weather days are likely to influence bushfire frequency and intensity across the Central West and Orana

region and result in an earlier start to the bushfire season. Higher rainfall in autumn is likely to accelerate all forms of soil erosion across the region and increase run-off during this time of year.

Climate change may change the size of populations and the distribution of species and alter the geographical extent and species composition of habitats and ecosystems. Species most at risk are those unable to migrate or adapt, particularly those with small population sizes, narrow ranges or slow growth rates, such as the Camden white gum.

Highly cleared and fragmented ecosystems, such as the grassy woodlands in the park are likely to be at greater risk from the effects of climate change than more intact ecosystems (NSW SC 2000).

Box 2: Climate Change

Human-induced climate change is listed as a key threatening process under the BC Act (NSW SC 2000), and habitat loss caused by human-induced greenhouse gas emissions is listed under the EPBC Act (TSSC 2001). Below is a snapshot of the predicted changes to climate for the Central West and Orana region of New South Wales (adapted from Adapt NSW, n.d.).

- Average temperatures are projected to increase in the near future (i.e. 2020–2039) by 0.7°C.
- Average temperatures are projected to increase in the far future (i.e. 2060–2079) by 2.11°C.
- The number of hot days (i.e. >35°C) will increase by 9 days/year in the near future and 27 days/year in the far future.
- The number of cold nights (i.e. <2°C) will decrease by 7.7 days/year in the near future and 22.5 days/year in the far future.
- Rainfall is projected to decrease in summer, spring and winter in the near future.
- Rainfall is projected to increase in autumn.
- Severe fire weather is projected to increase primarily in summer and spring.

2.1.1 Management considerations and opportunities

Maintaining the quality and extent of regent honeyeater habitat is a key focus for the park. Management should focus on mitigating threats to the regent honeyeater and expanding and enhancing areas of habitat through revegetation and regeneration of native vegetation. Recent and future restoration projects that focus on supplementing its habitat should not only assist this critically endangered species but should also benefit a suite of other declining woodland birds, such as the brown treecreeper. Habitat restoration programs also have the potential to help offset carbon emissions.

In 2018, NPWS partnered with CO2 Australia in round 7 of the Emissions Reduction Fund to undertake revegetation plantings in a number of NPWS reserves, including Capertee National Park.

Local provenance species were grown, planted and maintained by CO2 Australia, with species selection advised by regent honeyeater specialists. The treatment area comprised 109,000 trees and shrubs planted over 98 ha of open, cleared sites where natural regeneration was minimal. Future habitat restoration and revegetation in other locations may be undertaken following appropriate environmental assessment and consultation.

Within the park, weed control should continue to be focused on perennial species such as blackberry, tree of heaven, prickly pear, mother of millions and serrated tussock. Pasture weeds such as thistles, St John's wort, brassicas, Patterson's curse and African marigold are most common in the cleared river flats and are treated selectively. The Capertee River corridor downstream of Capertee Homestead has also been a focus for the removal of exotic fruit trees and ornamentals.

A number of feral animals are found within the park (see Appendix G). The NPWS regional pest management strategy for the Blue Mountains Region identifies the species at risk from feral animals in the park, and includes actions and priorities for feral animal management (OEH 2012a). Feral animals of most concern include the goat, rabbit, feral cat, wild dog and pig. Stray livestock have also been observed in the park in the past and can have a major impact on the park. The primary objective of feral animal management in the park is to minimise adverse impacts on threatened species, biodiversity and other park and community values while complying with legislative responsibilities. Where feasible, feral animal management programs are undertaken in cooperation with neighbouring land managers.

2.2 Geology, landform and hydrology

Capertee National Park is bisected by the Capertee River, which runs through the park from the north to the south-east and forms wide alluvial flats and steep rugged gorges (see Figure 1). Much of the land on the alluvial river flats has been cleared during past private ownership. The remainder of the park is predominantly naturally vegetated hills and slopes with eucalypt forest ranging in elevation from 400 to 1,031 m above sea level.

The geology of the park provides a good example of the unconformity between the Lachlan Fold Belt and the Sydney Basin. Older Devonian sediments of the Lachlan Fold Belt underlie the younger Permian and Triassic sediments of the Sydney Basin, and this time break is clear in the park. The Lachlan Fold Belt covers most of New South Wales and Victoria, extending to other eastern states and territories. It is a geological zone of folded and faulted rocks formed in the Middle Paleozoic between 450 and 340 million years ago. It consists of sandstones, shales and volcanic rocks, which have been intruded by numerous granite bodies and deformed by 4 episodes of folding, faulting and uplift.

Quartzite, limestone, shales, phyllite and schist, dating from the Devonian, are exposed in the walls and base of the main north–south valley in the park. The presence of Devonian limestone has led to the formation of an extensive area of karst landforms, including sinkholes, springs and crevices. Tufa deposits are also found in the park where springs high in carbonate minerals percolate to the surface. Above these, in areas over approximately 600 m in elevation, there are outcrops of the Sydney Basin Permian formation sediments such as sandstone.

The soils within the park are shallow red earth and red podzolic soils/terra rossa intergrades, and have been classified into 3 different groups:

- colluvial landscapes – comprised of shallow to moderately deep stony lithosols and earthy sand
- Umbiella Group – characterised by level to gently inclined alluvial floodplains and valley flats draining Devonian and Permian sediments with rich alluvial loam soils
- Port Macquarie Group – characterised by gently undulating to rolling rises and low hills beneath narrow crests.

The park is part of the north-west subcatchment of the Hawkesbury–Nepean catchment. The Capertee River winds its way for 11 km through the park, often flowing underground leaving the seemingly dry, sandy river bed visible. Further downstream the Capertee River flows through Wollemi National Park to its confluence with Wolgan River to form the Colo River and then into the Hawkesbury River. Ulumbra, Deadmans and Oaky creeks are semi-permanent watercourses that flow through the park into Capertee River.

2.2.1 Management considerations and opportunities

Significant erosion from flood events is evident throughout the river valley, particularly on the wide river flats. Some creek and river crossings associated with park roads may need to be rerouted, formalised (with infrastructure) or closed if damage to river and creek banks is occurring, or if a crossing becomes unsafe.

Geological features, including sinkholes, gullies and, potentially, cave entrances have been damaged through excavation or dumping rubbish and waste during past land use. Further work is required to clean-up and rehabilitate these areas.

The upper reaches of the Capertee River catchment lie outside the park on predominantly private land, thus there is potential for the introduction of pollutants, weed propagules and sediment to the park by downstream movement.

Minimising pollution of the Capertee River within the park is also important to protect the Colo River in Wollemi National Park downstream of Capertee National Park, which is declared a wild river under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The continued application of a total catchment management approach is required to minimise adverse impacts on the whole catchment.

Photo 3 **Example of the sedimentary layering found in the Capertee Valley. Tim Johnson/DPE**

3. Looking after our culture and heritage

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people place values on cultural and natural landscapes. These values may be attached to the landscape as a whole, or to parts of the landscape (e.g. a particular plant, animal or place). All landscapes contain the imprint of human use. On any given area of land some historical activity will have taken place. Much of the Australian environment has been influenced by past Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal land-use practices, and people continue to influence the land through their use and practices.

What is 'Country'?

To Aboriginal people, the landscape is made up of many features that are interrelated. These include land, water, plants and animals, places and stories, historical and current uses, and people and their interactions with each other and place. These features are central to Aboriginal spirituality and contribute to Aboriginal identity. They are inseparable and make up what is known as 'Country'. As Rose (1996) explains:

'Country in Aboriginal English is not only a common noun but also a proper noun. People talk about Country in the same way that they would talk about a person: they speak to Country, sing to Country, visit Country, worry about Country, feel sorry for Country, and long for Country. People say that Country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, is sorry or happy. Country is a living entity with a yesterday, today and tomorrow, with a consciousness, and a will toward life. Because of this richness, Country is home, and peace; nourishment for body, mind, and spirit; heart's ease.'

Shared Country refers to lands or places that are 'common ground' shared by Aboriginal people from adjoining Country, or areas within the traditional Country of a particular people that are used by other Aboriginal people. These lands and places may be used, for example, to access water during drought, for ceremony, marriage or trade.

3.1 Aboriginal culture and heritage

Capertee National Park lies within the traditional Country of the Wiradjuri People. This Country – the land, water, plants and animals within the landscape – are all central to Aboriginal spirituality and contribute to Aboriginal identity. Aboriginal communities associate natural resources with the use and enjoyment of foods and medicines, caring for the land, passing on cultural knowledge, kinship systems and strengthening social bonds. Aboriginal heritage and connection to nature are inseparable and need to be managed in an integrated manner across the landscape.

Aboriginal sites are places with evidence of Aboriginal occupation or that are related to other aspects of Aboriginal culture. They are part of the culture and history of local Aboriginal people. Aboriginal connections to the Capertee Valley continue, and are evident through a vast number of sites, including artefact scatters, and rock shelters that may contain art and grinding grooves. There were violent interactions between Wiradjuri People and the first non-Aboriginal people to arrive in the area. At least one massacre of Wiradjuri People is known to have occurred. The park is a place where past injustice can be acknowledged.

Traditional food plants are abundant in the area, and traditional travel routes have been identified in the park. The area is renowned for its large, heavy implements, with the 'Capertian' stone tool style named after the valley where these artefacts were recorded in a rock shelter near Bogee, approximately 6 km north-east of the park.

Capertee National Park falls within the administrative area of the Bathurst Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC). Other groups who have an interest in the park include the Mudgee LALC, Mingaan Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation, North East Wiradjuri Co Limited and the North Eastern Wiradjuri Community Fund Limited. There is a native title claim (NSD857/2017) over a large area that includes Capertee National Park, however, the previous freehold status of the park has extinguished native title.

In 2011 the local Aboriginal community, in conjunction with the University of Sydney and the Shellshear Museum, participated in the repatriation of ancestral remains back to Country. Capertee National Park was selected as the most appropriate location because it was close to the site near Glen Alice (located east of the park) where the remains had been originally collected in the 1950s. Wiradjuri knowledge-holders held a ceremony for the repatriation of their ancestral remains. This was the first repatriation to be held in the Lithgow Local Government Area and NPWS Blue Mountains Region. The site is now highly significant to the Wiradjuri People. Any visitation to this site requires the consent of a Wiradjuri knowledge-holder. The site should not be signposted or shown on maps or interpretive material.

3.1.1 Management considerations and opportunities

Although the NSW Government has legal responsibility for the protection of Aboriginal sites and places, NPWS acknowledges the right of Aboriginal people to make decisions about their own heritage. Aboriginal communities should be consulted and involved in managing Aboriginal sites, places and related issues, and in promoting and presenting Aboriginal culture and history.

There are highly significant cultural sites located within the park that are susceptible to damage. The park has not been comprehensively surveyed for archaeological sites, and therefore there is a risk of damage or degradation to unrecorded sites as a result of management, recreational activities and natural deterioration. The identification and protection of Aboriginal sites should be overseen by appropriate representatives of the Aboriginal community.

Collaboration with relevant Aboriginal groups should continue to promote the sharing of knowledge, the identification and recording of significant sites and the protection of Aboriginal sites, places and values.

3.2 Historic heritage

History has taken place across the landscape. The shared history of the first Australians – Aboriginal people – and history since European settlement is represented through our historic heritage. This comprises places and items that may have historic, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, landscape or aesthetic significance. NPWS conserves the significant historic heritage features of NSW parks.

Pastoral activity in the Capertee area started as early as the 1840s with the arrival of Irish and Scottish immigrants. The first recorded purchase of the land, now forming part of Capertee National Park, was that of Thomas Barnaby in 1854. In 1861 the land was purchased by James Gallagher along with other blocks of land in the area. The Gallagher family owned the property until 1944, after which it was bought and sold a number of times, finally in 1977 by the Harrison family. In 2010 the property was purchased from the Harrisons in order to establish Capertee National Park.

Historically large areas of the valley floor and slopes were cleared to provide grazing lands for sheep and cattle. In later years, lucerne was grown extensively on the river flats. Relics from this era include the homestead, woolshed, yards and an orchard, as well as other structures and machinery formerly used on the working farm. The current homestead, Capertee Homestead, was built in the 1920s on the site of the original homestead and using parts of the original homestead in its construction. It was substantially renovated in the 1980s, and further renovations were completed by NPWS in 2013 to make it suitable for visitor accommodation. A cottage dating from the 1970s, Capertee Cottage, is also used for visitor accommodation. A shed in the Capertee Homestead precinct is used by NPWS for storage.

The woolshed was originally built in the 1950s and has been modified, rebuilt and extended in the years since. The Gallagher family used it as a house for a time. The orchard near the woolshed still contains apple, peach, pear, fig and walnut trees.

Mining for alluvial gold and other minerals occurred on the property, particularly during the gold rush of the 1850s and 1860s. Signs of this past mining activity can be found along the river in the form of stone water races and stone shelters built by prospectors. During the First World War, plans were made to establish an oil shale works on the land, however, vital equipment that had to be shipped from England was lost when the ship sank in the Mediterranean Sea, and the plans were abandoned.

3.2.1 Management considerations and opportunities

An assessment of historic infrastructure within the park is required to identify assets of historic significance. Should any built infrastructure be found to be of national, state or high local historic heritage significance in the future, a conservation management plan should be prepared. A heritage action statement should be prepared for structures of local heritage significance to guide future management and works. Assets that are not of heritage significance may have the potential to be removed or adapted for alternate purposes.

4. Providing for visitor use and enjoyment

NPWS aims to ensure that visitors enjoy, experience and appreciate parks at the same time as conserving and protecting park values.

While levels of visitation are relatively low in comparison to higher profile parks in the region, Capertee National Park provides opportunities for self-reliant, nature-based activities, including camping, bushwalking, birdwatching, horse riding, cycling and 4-wheel drive (4WD) touring. Short-term visitor accommodation is also available, with 2 of the homesteads also being suitable for small conferences and meetings. See Figure 1. The provision of these facilities makes the park a desirable meeting place for interest groups, clubs and families.

The park is only accessible via Port Macquarie Road (off Glen Alice Road) and is gated. Visitors need to obtain a code to gain access. Gating provides a level of security for the buildings and infrastructure present in the park. Fossicking is not a recent use of the park and is not permitted.

4.1 Accommodation and camping

Two buildings that were formerly part of the Port Macquarie property have been adapted to provide accommodation for visitors. **Capertee Homestead** (known locally as 'Port Macquarie') is a large 4-bedroom building with an adjacent studio annex which together accommodate up to 14 people. The homestead is fully self-contained and suitable for short-stay public accommodation and small conferences. **Capertee Cottage** is a small, fibro building with 2 bedrooms and a living area with kitchenette. This building can accommodate up to 6 people and is suitable for small groups.

The Glenolan addition to the park included a 5-bedroom house (now known as **Honeyeater Homestead**) that is suitable for short-stay accommodation, small conferences and meetings. The property is on the eastern side of the Capertee River, enabling visitors to enjoy the park when river heights limit access to the other accommodation options that can only be accessed by crossing the river.

The **Caretakers Cottage** (near the Capertee Homestead) may provide opportunities for use as visitor accommodation in the future.

There are 3 designated camping areas in the park (see Table 1 and Figure 1). Individual sites are not designated at any of the camping areas. Vehicle-based camping is currently available at the main **Capertee Camping Area,** which is popular with groups. Camping at Capertee Camping Area operates through an online booking system and camping fees apply. Camping at **Woolshed Flat** is available for visitors requiring yards for their horses. Both sites are located in an open, river flat setting. **Policemans Point Bush Camping Area** is located at a remote riverside location that is only accessible to walkers and cyclists. Camping at Policemans Point operates through an online booking system and booking fees apply.

Facilities for camping are summarised in Table 1. Rubbish bins are not provided, and generators are not permitted. As well as Policemans Point, bush camping opportunities are available throughout the park at locations that are more than 100 m from park roads and the park's day use and camping areas, and that are more than 500 m from the park's boundaries.

Table 1 Camping areas in the park

Camping area name	Number of sites/ capacity	Access	Style of camping	General facilities
Capertee Camping Area	10 sites (max.) 10 people per site 100-person capacity	2WD (except during high water)	Vehicle-based	Picnic tables, toilet and fireplaces
Policemans Point Bush Camping Area	6 sites 20-person capacity	1 km walk or cycle	Walk-in camping	None
Woolshed Flat	10-person capacity	2WD	Vehicle-based camping with horses	Horse yards

4.1.1 Management considerations and opportunities

Camping and accommodation in the park is currently fit for purpose. However, progressive improvements to roofed accommodation may be necessary in the future, and there are opportunities to use Caretakers Cottage as visitor accommodation in the future. Improved delineation of camping areas may also be required to limit any impacts.

4.2 Cycling

The popularity of cycling in the park is increasing. The park provides a network of tracks with varying difficulty, length and scenery. Cycling is currently permitted on all park roads and management trails in the park (see Figure 1). Cycling is not permitted off-track. Cycling may be prohibited on other trails via signage.

4.2.1 Management considerations and opportunities

Former farm tracks could provide additional opportunities for cycling in the future. If the popularity of the park for cycling increases, it may be necessary to monitor and prevent the incremental development of unauthorised cycling trails by cyclists.

4.3 Horse riding

Horse riding is a popular recreational activity that has cultural associations for many Australians. The *NPWS strategic directions for horse riding in NSW national parks* (OEH 2012b) provides a framework to improve riding opportunities in 8 priority regions in New South Wales, including the NPWS Blue Mountains Region.

It is recognised that many riders enjoy riding in bushland. However, if undertaken in undesignated areas, horse riding can lead to erosion, vegetation trampling, weed introduction, damage to cultural sites, increased nutrient inputs into watercourses and conflicts with other park users.

Horse riding is currently allowed on park roads. Horse riding is not permitted on walking tracks or management trails.

Overnight camping with horses is currently allowed at Woolshed Flat where yards and a water supply for horses is available. This is the only location that horses may be kept overnight in the park.

Horse riding that is part of a competition or a group larger than 10 horses (including pack horses) requires written consent, and all commercial horse riding activities require a licence.

4.3.1 Management considerations and opportunities

Ongoing communication will be required to ensure that horse riders are aware of the areas available for their activity. Site rehabilitation in conjunction with horse riders may be necessary if impacts from horse riding become apparent in the park.

Former farm tracks could provide additional opportunities for horse riding in the future.

4.4 Picnicking and day use

Day use areas, typically picnic facilities or sites for interpretation and education, are often the main destination for visitors. The park is becoming increasingly popular for day use by bushwalkers and birdwatchers. There are 4 day use areas offering a range of opportunities in a variety of settings (see Table 2 and Figure 1). Rubbish bins are not provided so visitors are required to carry out all rubbish.

Table 2 Day use and picnic areas

Day use area	Site features/setting	Car park capacity	Vehicle access
Valley Lookout	Scenic lookout with views across the whole park	4 vehicles	4WD
Woolshed Flat	Ruins and orchard, close to river	8 vehicles	2WD
Airly Lookout	Scenic lookout in a remote area of the park	4 vehicles	4WD
Airstrip Lookout	Old airstrip, scenic views	NA	Walk or cycle only

4.4.1 Management considerations and opportunities

The current day use and picnic areas are appropriate to support current levels of use. While these sites are expected to remain low profile, some improvements to facilities may be considered in the future to meet visitor needs. Improved information and interpretation may help visitors to gain a greater appreciation of the park's Aboriginal cultural heritage, historic heritage and biodiversity values.

4.5 Bushwalking

Bushwalking enables visitors to enjoy the park and connect with nature. The walking tracks are largely unformed and have limited directional signage. Walking opportunities are also available on all management trails. Visitors who are experienced and equipped for self-reliant bushwalking may also utilise the more remote areas of the park.

4.5.1 Management considerations and opportunities

With the network of management trails and informal pre-existing tracks in the park, there is the potential to develop longer loop walks to enhance the bushwalking experience for self-reliant visitors. To expand on the range of walking opportunities for less-experienced walkers, development and interpretation of certain routes may be undertaken to formalise some of the more popular and easily accessible routes.

4.6 Group activities

The availability of cleared areas, camping areas and roofed accommodation make Capertee National Park attractive for group activities. Bushwalking groups, birdwatching groups and 4WD clubs visit the park regularly for day and overnight trips.

Commercial activities require consent. Larger group-based activities also require consent (see Table 3). Applications for activities that are consistent with the plan of management may be authorised. The authorisation of some activities such as geocaching, rogaining and commercial filming is also guided by NPWS policy.

Table 3 Group size thresholds requiring additional NPWS consent

Nature of activity undertaken	Number of participants
Birdwatching, bushwalking, picnicking and 4WD touring	20 or more people or 10 or more vehicles
Cycling	20 or more people
Rogaining and orienteering	Any number
Walking	20 or more people
Horse riding	10 horses (including pack animals)

4.6.1 Management considerations and opportunities

Group activities can provide opportunities for people who would otherwise not be able to experience the park, and can promote environmental understanding and support for conservation. Liaison with groups is required to ensure that impacts are managed and to ensure that opportunities for independent visitors are not restricted.

The park provides scope for commercially operated tourism services such as guided tours, cultural experiences and organised educational activities.

Photo 4 Birdwatching group in Capertee National Park. Nick Cubbin/DPE

5. Infrastructure and services

Infrastructure managed by NPWS includes the park road network, water tanks, bores, management trails, buildings and boundary fences. Some historic infrastructure contributes to the experience of visitors. Management trails are critical for fire and feral animal and weed management and are also available for authorised forms of visitor use (see Section 4). Some buildings may be adapted for new uses such as visitor accommodation. Buildings such as sheds may be used for park management functions such as equipment storage.

5.1 Power system

Infrastructure within the park that is not managed by NPWS includes power transmission lines that provide power to several buildings, and a phone line connected to Honeyeater Homestead and the Caretakers Cottage. A stand-alone power system is approved for trial in the park. If the trial is successful, removal of the existing power line may occur, reducing the need for vegetation management associated with power supply in the homestead valley precinct.

5.1.1 Management considerations and opportunities

In the future, it may be necessary to improve communications within the park and upgrade power supply infrastructure through the installation of additional assets within the park. There may also be opportunities in the future to decommission some of this infrastructure or replace it with something less obtrusive.

Photo 5 **Looking south across Capertee National Park from Valley Lookout. Tim Johnson/DPE**

Appendices

Appendix A Legislation and policy

NSW legislation

- National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974
- National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2019
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Heritage Act 1977
- Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016
- Biosecurity Act 2015

Commonwealth legislation

- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992

National Parks and Wildlife Service policies and strategies

A range of NPWS policies and strategies may also apply to park management, including:

- park management policies
- regional feral animal and weed management strategies
- fire management strategies.

Other laws, policies and strategies may also apply. Please contact NPWS for advice.

Appendix B Scientific plant and animal names

The following table shows the scientific names for common plant and animal names used in this plan (that are not listed in any other appendices).

Table 4 Scientific names used in this plan

Common name	Scientific name
Plants	
Camden white gum	*Eucalyptus benthamii*
River she-oak	*Casuarina cunninghamiana*
Animals	
Australian raven	*Corvus coronoides*
Grey kangaroo	*Macropus giganteus*
Noisy miner	*Manorina melancocephala*
Pied currawong	*Strepera graculina*

Appendix C Vegetation communities

Table 5 Vegetation communities in the park

State vegetation classification (Keith 2004)	Vegetation community (DEC 2006b)
Dry rainforest	Mountain Gully Grey Myrtle Dry Rainforest (MU2)
Southern escarpment wet sclerophyll forests	Hillslope Talus Mountain Gum – Brown Stringybark – Grey Gum – Broad-leaved Hickory Moist Forest (MU3)
Tableland clay grassy woodland	Mount Vincent Basalt Ribbon Gum Grassy Forest (MU9)
Southern tableland grassy woodland	Tableland Gully Ribbon Gum – Blackwood – Apple Box Forest (MU13)
Western slopes dry sclerophyll forests	Capertee Grey Gum – Narrow-leaved Stringybark – Scribbly Gum – Callitris – Ironbark Shrubby Open Forest (MU38) Capertee Hills White Box – Tumbledown Redgum – Ironbark – Callitris Shrubby Woodland (MU42)
Western slopes grassy woodland	Capertee Limestone Hills Grey Box – Grass Tree – Spinifex Grassy Woodland (MU16) * Capertee Marl Box Grassy Woodlands (MU18) * Capertee Box – Narrow-leaf Ironbark – Callitris Grassy Woodland (MU19) * Capertee Rough-barked Apple – Redgum – Yellow Box Grassy Woodlands (MU20) * Capertee – Wolgan Slopes Red Box – Grey Gum – Stringybark Grassy Open Forest (MU21)

Notes:

* White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Woodland critically endangered ecological community.

Threatened ecological community description:

White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland in the NSW North Coast, New England Tableland, Nandewar, Brigalow Belt South, Sydney Basin, South Eastern Highlands, NSW South Western Slopes, South East Corner and Riverina Bioregions (commonly referred to as Box-Gum Woodland) was listed as a critically endangered ecological community (CEEC) on 17 July 2020.

It is an open woodland community (sometimes occurring as a forest formation), in which the most obvious species are one or more of the following: white box (*Eucalyptus albens*), yellow box (*E. melliodora*) and Blakely's red gum (*E. blakelyi*). Intact sites contain a high diversity of plant species, including the main tree species, additional tree species, some shrub species, several climbing plant species, many grasses and a very high diversity of herbs. The community also includes a range of mammal, bird, reptile, frog and invertebrate fauna species. Intact stands that contain diverse upper and mid-storeys and ground layers are rare.

Modified sites include areas where the main tree species are present, ranging from an open woodland formation to a forest structure, and the ground layer is predominantly composed of exotic species; sites where the trees have been removed and only the grassy ground layer and some herbs remain.

The Australian Government listing of White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland is slightly different to the NSW listing.

Areas that are part of the Australian Government-listed ecological community must have either: an intact tree layer and predominately native ground layer; or an intact native ground layer with a high diversity of native plant species but no remaining tree layer.

Appendix D Threatened plant species

Table 6 Threatened plant species recorded in the park

Common name	Scientific name	BC Act status	EPBC Act status
Capertee stringybark	*Eucalyptus cannonii* (syn. *Eucalyptus macrorhyncha* subsp. *cannonii)*	V	–
Grey grevillea	*Grevillea obtusiflora*	E	E
–	*Phebalium bifidum*	E	–

Notes:

BC Act = Biodiversity Conservation Act; EPBC Act = Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act; V = vulnerable; E = endangered, – = not listed.

Common plant names from PlantNET (The NSW Plant Information Network System). Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, Sydney. http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au (28/3/2023).

Source: BioNet (OEH 2023).

Appendix E Threatened animal species

Table 7 Threatened animal species recorded in or near the park

Common name	Scientific name	BC Act status	EPBC Act status
Birds			
Barking owl	*Ninox connivens*	V	–
Black bittern	*Ixobrychus flavicollis*	V	–
Black-chinned honeyeater (eastern subspecies)	*Melithreptus gularis*	V	–
Black falcon *	*Falco subniger*	V	–
Brown treecreeper (eastern subspecies)	*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*	V	–
Diamond firetail	*Stagonopleura guttata*	V	–
Dusky woodswallow	*Artamus cyanopterus cyanopterus*	V	–
Flame robin	*Petroica phoenicea*	V	–
Gang-gang cockatoo	*Callocephalon fimbriatum*	V	E
Gilbert's whistler *	*Pachycephala inornata*	V	–
Glossy black-cockatoo	*Calyptorhynchus lathami*	V	V
Grey-crowned babbler (eastern subspecies) *	*Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis*	V	–
Hooded robin	*Melanodryas cucullata cucullata*	V	–
Little eagle	*Hieraaetus morphnoides*	V	–
Little lorikeet	*Glossopsitta pusilla*	V	–
Painted honeyeater *	*Grantiella picta*	V	V
Powerful owl	*Ninox strenua*	V	–
Regent honeyeater	*Anthochaera phrygia*	CE (AIS)	CE
Scarlet robin	*Petroica boodang*	V	–
Speckled warbler	*Chthonicola sagittata*	V	–
Square-tailed kite *	*Lophoictinia isura*	V	–
Swift parrot	*Lathamus discolor*	E	CE
Turquoise parrot	*Neophema pulchella*	V	–
Varied sittella	*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*	V	–
White-bellied sea eagle	*Haliaeetus leucogaster*	V	–
White-throated needletail	*Hirundapus caudacutus*	–	V
Mammals			
Eastern false pipistrelle *	*Falsistrellus tasmaniensis*	V	–
Grey-headed flying-fox	*Pteropus poliocephalus*	V	V
Large bent-winged bat	*Miniopterus schreibersii oceanensis*	V	–
Large-eared pied bat	*Chalinolobus dwyeri*	V	V

Common name	Scientific name	BC Act status	EPBC Act status
Southern greater glider	*Petauroides volans*	E	E
Spotted-tailed quoll	*Dasyurus maculatus*	V	E
Yellow-bellied sheathtail-bat *	*Saccolaimus flaviventris*	V	–

Notes:

BC Act = Biodiversity Conservation Act; EPBC Act = Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act; V = vulnerable; E = endangered; CE = critically endangered; AIS = asset of intergenerational significance, – = not listed.

* = recorded within 5km and could potentially exist in the park.

Source: BioNet (OEH 2023).

Appendix F Priority weeds

Table 8 Priority weeds in the park

Common name	Scientific name
African marigold	*Cineraria lyrata*
African olive [1 2]	*Olea europaea subsp. cuspidata*
Alligator weed [3]	*Alternanthera philoxeroides*
Asparagus fern [3]	*Asparagus virgatus*
Blackberry [1 3]	*Rubus fruticosus agg.*
Box elder	*Acer negundo*
Brassicas [2]	*Brassica spp.*
Bridal creeper [1]	*Asparagus asparagoides*
Chilian needle grass [1]	*Nassella neesiana*
Exotic fruit trees – fig, peach, apple, walnut, pear	*Ficus* spp., *Prunus* spp., *Malus domestica, Juglans* spp., *Pyrus* spp.
Exotic perennial grasses [2]	*Various*
Great mullein	*Verbascum thapsus*
Green cestrum [1]	*Cestrum parqui*
Honey locust tree	*Gleditsia triacanthos*
Lantana [1 2 3]	*Lantana camara*
Moth vine	*Araujia sericifera*
Mother of millions [1]	*Bryophyllum delagoense*
Narrow-leaved privet	*Ligustrum sinense*
Paterson's curse	*Echium* spp.
Prickly pear [3]	*Opuntia* spp.
Privet spp. [1]	*Ligustrum species*
Serrated tussock [1]	*Nassella trichotoma*
St John's wort [1]	*Hypericum perforatum*
Thistles [2]	*Onopordum* spp.
Tobacco bush	*Solanum mauritianum*
Tree of heaven [2]	*Ailanthus altissima*
Vines and scramblers [2]	*Various*
Wandering dew	*Tradescantia fluminensis*
Willow-leaf primrose [1]	*Ludwigia peruviana*
Willows [1 3]	*Salix* spp.

Notes:

1. Regional priority species Central Tablelands regional strategic weed management plan 2017–2022 (LLS 2017).
2. Declared a key threatening process under the Biodiversity Conservation Act.
3. Declared Weed of National Significance.

Appendix G Feral animals

Table 9 Feral animals in the park

Common name	Scientific name	KTP	LLS
Birds			
Common myna	*Sturnus tristis*	–	–
Common starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*	–	–
Eurasian blackbird	*Turdus merula*	–	–
Red-whiskered bulbul	*Pycnonotus jocosus*	–	–
Spotted turtle-dove	*Streptopelia chinensis*	–	–
Mammals			
Cat	*Felis catus* [1 3]	Y	–
Goat	*Capra hircus* [1 3]	Y	–
Pig	*Sus scrofa* [1 2 3]	Y	–
Rabbit	*Oryctolagus cuniculus*	Y	Y
Red fox	*Vulpes vulpes* [1 2 3 4]	Y	Y
Feral dog	*Canis lupus familiaris*	Y	Y

Notes:

KTP = key threatening process listed under NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* and/or Commonwealth Environment Protection and *Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

LLS = Priority species in Central Tablelands regional strategic pest animal plan 2018–2023 (LLS 2018).

– = not listed/applicable

1. Key threatening process under EPBC Act.
2. Declared pest under the *Local Land Services Act 2013*.
3. Key threatening process under the TSC Act.
4. Threat abatement plan endorsed for this species.

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More information

- Biodiversity Conservation Program webpage
- Capertee National Park plan of management
- IUCN Red List of Threatened Species
- NPWS park management policies
- NSW BioNet Atlas webpage
- Saving our Species program webpage
- Weeds of National Significance – NSW Department of Primary Industries webpage

Legislation

- NSW Legislation – NSW Government webpage
- Cth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999